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ABSTRACT

A residential concept which developed when administrators and students sought to determine a residential program which would contribute to fulfillment of an institutional goal--that of better accommodating in the largest sense of the word the junior college transfer is discussed. The participants in the program represented people who entered the program at various points and are thus able to contribute several significant vantage points. A review is presented of the historical development of the public community college system in Florida. This discussion explains how the need developed to serve transfer students at Florida State University. The numerous facets of the transfer program that was set up at this university are described in some detail. A future program in the process of being formulated is an evaluation program to measure satisfaction with the institution, participation level and involvement and other adjustment measures such as grade point average. (BW/Author)

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The "Transfer Center": A New Residence Concept

Florida State University

Tallahassee, Florida

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Our purpose today is to share with you a residential concept which developed when administrators and students sought to determine a residential program which would contribute to fulfillment of an institutional goal -- that of better accomodating in the largest sense of the word the junior college transfer. Our program participants represent people who came into the program at various points along the way -- and thus, we feel, will make significant contributions from several vantage points to your understanding of the Transfer Center concept at Florida State University.

Florida has one of the best recognized community college programs in the nation. Interest in a state system of public junior colleges was first expressed in the report of the Citizens Committee on Education in 1947. In response to that call, the legislature passed a series of acts which permitted the establishment of public junior colleges as part of the public school system. By 1950, five state supported community colleges were operating under this plan.

Five years later, the Council for the Study of Higher Education in Florida issued a plea for an expanded state junior college system. The 1955 Legislature made a vigorous response to their recommendations. It appropriated four million dollars to expand and equip the existing public junior colleges, created a Community College Council, authorized a staff for the Council, and appropriated funds to finance an extensive study of the state junior college program and needs.

Currently 27 junior colleges serve the state and the 28th will begin operation in 1972. This will complete the master plan, taking only 15 years from the time of the plan's adoption in 1957. In the fall of 1971, the 27 public junior colleges in operation had an enrollment of 170,881, of which 120,267 were enrolled in the university transfer program. This compares with an enrollment of 78,412 for the seven state universities. Further, the largest institution of higher education in the state is Miami Dade Junior College where 33,517 students were enrolled during the fall semester, 1970.

In one economically deprived junior college district in 1957, only 15% of the high school graduates attended college. Within a few years 55% of the high school graduates of the district were able to attend college, most of whom entered the local junior college created in 1958. While the universities may have lost some beginning freshmen due to the emergence of the junior colleges, the pool of students becoming available at the junior year grew fantastically. In 1965, for the first time, more than half of the high school graduates of the state entered post-secondary educational institutions.

Since 1968 approximately 65% of all students entering Florida colleges and universities for the first time have entered a Florida public junior college. This compares to about 18% of first-time, in-college students who enter the state's universities.

In 1968, the Florida public junior colleges, having reached maturity, and in some cases outgrowing their parents, were separated from the county

school systems of the state. The institutions were placed under District Boards of Trustees, appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Cabinet and the Senate. In 1971 the token local tax support was discontinued and now all tax money supporting operational and capital outlay costs come from state appropriations.

The junior college system in Florida developed so rapidly that it was difficult to work out adequate communications. Indeed, for a time the "articulation" problem developed faster than the leadership within the two systems could solve it.

Dr. E. Lawrence Chalmers, then Academic Vice President at Florida State University and now Chancellor at the University of Kansas, in 1959 spoke to the reluctance of institutions to acknowledge the important development of the Florida Junior College system.

> Traditional four year colleges and universities have remained completely oblivious to the relatively new and increasingly important growth and development of junior colleges throughout the state and nation. While the State of Florida has made a singular effort to accomodate junior college graduates by establishing two and possibly four new upper division universities, the older institutions have made little effort to recognize the significant shift away from increasing freshman enrollments (the pyramid shaped distribution of students) to increasing enrollments of upper division students (the spindle shaped distribution). Florida State University is no exception . . . An overly simplified analysis of the structure of the University reveals that this and every other traditional institution is overtly geared to entering students at the freshman level and at the post baccalaureate level, but not to transfer students entering upper division programs.

However, it was clear that the junior college system was intended to work and universities and junior colleges began to work out various "articulation agreements." The agreements were designed to treat all students alike in the higher educational systems of Florida, whether they began at a junior college or at a university. In late 1971 Florida State University made a landmark decision to recognize the integrity of the A.A. degree granted by Florida public junior colleges. Florida State University agreed that students transferring to the Florida State University who have received an Associate in Arts degree in a college-parallel program from a Florida public junior college will be considered to have satisfied liberal studies requirements at the university and to have completed at least ninety quarter hours of lower division work to be credited toward graduation.

Student Affairs programs, Orientation, residence halls, and financial aid were as slow as the university's academic programs to accomodate junior college graduates. While many facets of the university community gave lip service to providing special developmental opportunities for junior college transfers, little was actually accomplished.

The Residence Student Development area made a commitment to create a special pilot program for transfer students. Transfer students were involved in the initial concepts formulated to guide the developing center. Much persuasive conversation went forward before residence students were convinced that the idea was viable enough for them to give up a popular residence hall to house the center. Careful consideration was given to selection of staff -- the person selected to direct the program was a

Residence Counselor who was thoroughly familiar with the dilemnas faced by a junior college graduate transferring to Florida State University. She had done just that -- after completing an A.A. degree at Miami-Dade, the state's largest junior college. She came to Florida State University and remained until she completed a master's degree. She had worked for two years as a Residence Counselor in a large womens' residence hall and in Fall, 1971 began the first year of the Cawthon Hall Transfer Center. Mrs. Beverly McLean, Residence Counselor in Cawthon, will describe "what" we think is happening in Cawthon Hall, Florida State University's Transfer Center.

We had several criteria in mind when we started thinking about where we might put the transfer center. It would be necessary for us to choose a hall that was easily separated into co-ed wings. We felt that a small hall would have advantages over any of our very large halls. The main advantage is the personalization of a smaller hall. Our largest halls at Florida State accomodate about 650 students, so a small hall to us is 300 or less. We preferred a centrally located residence hall and one with fairly desirable facilities. Of the 13 residence halls we have at Florida State University, Cawthon Hall was our natural selection. Cawthon is built almost as two buildings with dual stairways, with a courtyard and parlor dividing the two, modified L-shaped wings. It has rooms to house 114 men and 120 women with a number of highly desirable single rooms on each floor.

It is centrally located on campus so that all classes are easily within ten minutes walking distance. The library is just across the street, the student health center, the social science building, the psychology and music buildings, student affairs and the administration buildings, are all not much more than a city block away. Cawthon is surrounded by more greeness than perhaps any other building on campus. To the West is Landis Green, Florida State University's gathering point of students, dogs, and frisbees, especially in the Spring. Cawthon is bordered on the North by gardens and on the East by one of the largest greens on campus. These areas have proven to be of great value to the transfer center program. On any day, given fair weather, you will find a co-ed game of volleyball, kick ball, frisbee, made up of Cawthon residents.

As a building, Cawthon has many advantages that have proven advantageous to the transfer center program. Sue Halvorson, one of our Resident Assistants who has helped implement the transfer center program this year and who lived in Cawthon when it was a women's hall, will give you a tour of Cawthon.

Imagine for just a moment that you are transferring to Florida State University from a junior college and are looking for a place to live. I'll give you a tour of Cawthon Hall. The first place I want to show you is the parlor. This is the heart of the dorm. If it were ever empty it would seem as large as the inside of a high school gymnasium, but there are always people here listening to the stereo, studying, pretending to study, or just relaxing. The furniture is very comfortable and is arranged in

clusters. This seems to make the room very personal and homey despite its size, but if you want a little more privacy there are three small rooms adjacent to the parlor where you can study or talk. The TV room is also adjacent to the parlor. We were fortunate to get a new color television this year just in time for the Superbowl Game. Next year the parlor will be redecorated. We are very excited about that. We plan to move the old furniture downstairs into one of the recreation rooms and make a study lounge out of it.

There are two recreation rooms in the basement. The one we plan to convert to a study lounge has the old television and a piano in it now. It is used as a meeting room, a study room, a party room, a practice room for music majors, and a variety of other purposes. The second recreation room has a pool table and a ping pong table which are almost always in use. You can check out the equipment for these activities at the switchboard. There are also basketballs, volleyballs, and a football there which you can check out.

In case you get hungry after all of that activity, there is a fat room in the basement. A fat room is a room full of all kinds of vending machines. If your appetite is bigger than that you could build a fire in the fireplace in the courtyard and have a picnic on the picnic tables on the patio or you could cook a meal in one of the two kitchens in the basement. Each kitchen has a large party room next to it where you can eat by yourself, in small groups, or have a big dinner party.

After all of that eating, if you decide you need to trim down a little or you decide to go on a health kick, there is a weight room in

the basement where you can get a little exercise. If you want to really look healthy, you can get a great tan on the sun deck, or on the grass in the courtyard.

Just in case you decide to take a break and do a little studying, there are two study rooms on the fourth floor. When you get tired of studying, you can go to your room and take a nap.

Each room is different from the next. Most are designed for two residents, but there are many private rooms available. The rooms are large and airy. They have high ceilings and large windows and are very comfortable. Thanks to the combined efforts of concerned residents and the efficient work of Mr. Pouncel, the hall manager, the building is kept in good repair, even on the guys' side.

Cawthon not only is centrally located on campus and has good facilities, but also offers a homey atmosphere that makes it much more than a place to sleep -- it's a place to live.

Since the conception of the transfer center concept, I have felt that the success of the program was largely dependent upon the involvement and attitudes of the people selected as "Good Neighbors." These people were to serve as informal initiators, involvers, helpers, and islands of information for the new transfers. The job of informal orientation to Florida State University, the community, etc., was entirely theirs. By the time all the plans for the transfer center were made and the Neighbors were selected, summer was fast approaching. There was time, however, for

all the neighbors and the staff to get together for a dinner and one short leadership training session before most of us left for the summer. During the summer, I communicated with each of the Neighbors by letter. In these letters, I outlined for them some of the generalizations I had gleaned from the research about transfer students. I expressed my excitement about this new kind of program at Florida State University and made some suggestions to them of things they might do to help make the Neighbors feel welcome and at home at Florida State so that their adjustment might be easier. The Neighbors were asked to come a day before the transfers so that they could work with the R.A.s on their floor on additional plans for the transfers. As a staff we shared some of the possibilities of programming for the Neighbors and transfers before the Neighbors came. Each RA came up with different ideas that he or she felt would be most successful for their floors and with which they could be most comfortable. Some R.A.s took the "sponsor" approach in which each Neighbor was assigned several transfers to sponsor. This would mean seeing that each of their sponsorees got moved in, oriented to the residence hall and campus, and advised on all kinds of things the first week or so of classes. The rooms of the Neighbors were identified and the R.A.s planned floor and co-ed parties during orientation week.

Besides the Neighbors and R.A.s serving in an informal way as information units, we had an information desk set up in the lobby throughout orientation week and the first week of classes. The questions that came over this desk alone easily ran into the thousands. Our staff policy was never to answer "I don't know" -- but to find the answer to all questions.

We tried to use the telephone as much as possible, calling academic advisors, the registrar, campus security, the bursar, the orientation director, telephone counseling service, and so on to help make the University's services most accessible to these new students.

From our first correspondence with the transfer students during the summer we tried to take every advantage of the Hawthorne effect, emphasizing that they had been "selected" to reside in an "experimental" transfer center "exclusively" for transfers where the staff and University were particularly interested in doing "something special" for the transfer student and programming for the transfer student's "special" needs. These words were emphasized over and over in my summer letter to the transfers, in the Cawthon handbook, in floor meetings, and in the staff's personal contacts with students until finally we started hearing some of our words coming back to us -- from the transfers! This is a special place. We belong. Too bad all transfers can't have this experience. The staff's and Neighbor's enthusiasm for the program had worn off on the transfers or else the idea of a transfer center really made sense.

I felt we could have had an even more exciting program this year if there had been more time to work with the Neighbors and if we could have more returning transfers rather than native students in the Neighbors program. So, this year we started early. As soon as we returned in January, I began to work with the Residence Hall Government on a selection procedure for the Neighbors for next year. The selection procedure included an application which helped determine the contributions a person had made to the residence hall first quarter. Incidentally, as soon as it

was announced that students would participate in leadership of Cawtnon activities, the participation level went way up and we had a surge of volunteers for committees and plethoria of suddenly dedicated workers and program planners, which makes me think we should have made this public sooner. The third part of the selection procedure was a nomination system whereby we asked each resident to identify four people in the hall who would most closely fit the definition we came up with for a Good Neighbor. I finally narrowed the applicants down to 25 men and 25 women who were selected to return to Cawthon next year. The selections were announced on the first day of the Annual Community College Retreat. I have been pleased that those who were not selected continue to contribute in a positive way to the transfer center program.

When the idea of a transfer center was first conceived, we made a commitment to the Office of Community College Affairs that we would be involved in a formal way in their annual Community College Retreat. This is a weekend in which community college students from all over the state are encouraged to come take a look at Florida State University -- question our administrators and students and judge if they would fit into the scheme of things at Florida State University. This year Cawthon sponsored the reception for these visiting potential transfers. The Cawthon residents felt an obligation to these students and came down in droves to talk to the potential transfers about Cawthon and Florida State University. The deans of the various schools, a number of administrators, including the President and some student affairs personnel, were also on hand at this reception to answer questions and welcome these potential transfers to

come to Florida State University.

These are some of the activities of the past year. Now Beverly Wise and Beverly Page will take up on plans for next year's Neighbors after their selection, where I left off.

As Mrs. McLean mentioned, the Neighbors have the specific purpose of helping the transfer students in any way they possibly can. This purpose can only be reached by those who are well-adjusted and at ease in their residence hall. The newly selected Neighbors have had several meetings to get to know each other and to share the ideas that each of us had about the program for next year.

In our first meeting we had an intermix. The men were told to form a group on one side of the room and the women on the opposite side of the room. We were then instructed to find a partner from the other group that we did not know very well and we were to discuss the topic of what we felt a Neighbors program should be. After five minutes we doubled the group size and shared our ideas. This was done until our groups had about ten people in them.

Once this group size was achieved and everyone knew each other, we began a brainstorming activity, which is when you are given a topic and you are to suggest anything and everything you feel is related to that subject. One of the rules of a brainstorming session is that any and every idea, no matter how ridiculous it may seem, is accepted as valuable, workable material. Since most of us had never done this before, we had a

trial run using the question of: "What would you do to improve an ink pen?" You would be very surprised at some of the wild ideas like: rejuvenating ink, a recording device so you make sure you get all the notes of a professor who lectures fast, a homing device, etc. Anyway, we were then instructed to brainstorm on how to improve the current Neighbors program for next year. Some of the outcomes were:

1. Neighbors should be divided among the floors according to the number of students per floor.
2. Neighbors should come to school the day before the others to go over last minute plans.
3. Most important - Neighbors should be available to answer questions, etc.
4. Have an information desk in the lobby.
5. Later in orientation week have group rap sessions to meet people and answer big questions about registration procedures, places on and off campus, which people seek for help, etc.

The last item we covered was to put in numerical order the basic needs of a transfer student according to their importance. This activity was done to help us discover every way we can help the new students get through the traumatic experiences of orientation week. Some of the most common needs mentioned in this activity were:

1. Locate room - meet roommate
2. Locate hall facilities
3. Get settled in room
4. Become acquainted with the dorm facilities
5. Become acquainted with the campus facilities
6. Find out how to keep cool, calm, and in control of all your mental processes while at registration
7. Meet people
8. Locate places to go off campus

One last project we are working on is to bring those people, who represent activities on campus, to the students and hold rap sessions.

Subjects we hope to include are: parking regulations, visitation hours, campus regulations, ID card pictures, and student organizations. These types of activities do not just apply to the week of orientation but rather to the whole school year for we feel that learning to work with others is a vital part of our complete education.

The Neighbor's meetings were the start of ideas for next Fall's Neighbor Program. As a result of these meetings, we formed three committees, each headed by a chairman, to help the transfer student adjust easily to dorm life, the University system, and the Tallahassee area.

To help the newly arrived transfer student to adjust to the dorm and its residents, one committee started planning activities for next Fall. These activities are educational as well as social, and may be enjoyed by one or more floors or dormwide. A favorite floor social is celebrating birthdays. Rap sessions with refreshments gives the transfer student the opportunity to meet the residents on his or her floor and ask the three basic questions: What is your name, where are you from, and what is your major. These activities can be enjoyed by two or more floors resulting in a joint floor social.

For a Dormwide activity almost anything goes, from Coffeehouses and dances to movies and guest speakers. Intermural activities will provide competition within the dorm with such sports as bowling, tennis, and volleyball.

The "Survival Packet" is an important project that a second committee is working on. The Survival Packet will be designed to acquaint the new transfer students with all aspects of the university and the Tallahassee community. It contains locations of restaurants, shopping areas, and entertainment spots on and off campus. It will aid the transfer students in finding guidance centers, classrooms, and other buildings on campus. The Packet also holds helpful hints on dorm living.

The Neighbors, however, did not forget themselves, they too were starting on a new adventure. "The Idea Booklet for Neighbors" is being made to aid the Neighbors in helping the transfer student find a home away from home in the dorm. An "open door policy" will be exercised by the Neighbors who will leave their doors open inviting the students to come in and talk. We feel being available and ready to discuss anything-anytime is an important characteristic of the Neighbors. This booklet also holds helpful hints and suggestions of activities and projects that will appeal to the transfer student.

Through these three committee projects and individual efforts by the Neighbors, the Neighbors will become not only advisors but also friends. The Neighbor Program is to set the pace for the dorm and residents. The transfer students will then be expected to "carry on" the activities and function of the dorm by establishment of a dorm government, using the Neighbors as a source of information and friendship.

As I'm sure you can all tell, we all have a feeling this is a good program for transfers, but in this age of accountability, "feeling" is certainly inadequate to prove a point. We are presently working on an evaluation of the program which will measure things like satisfaction with the institution, participation level and involvement in the institution, and other adjustment measures such as GPA. Our plans are to measure the transfer center residents against other transfers in similar residence halls and not so similar apartments and perhaps toward the end of this year, we will be able to make at least a tentative statement as to whether the segregation of transfers into small groups contributes in a positive way to the adjustment and education of the transfer student at Florida State University.